

Buying Barbara

by Julia Cleft-Addams • Author of "YOU CAN'T MARRY"

SYNOPSIS: The large fortune Barbara has inherited from her father, and Barbara has divided it equally between herself, the Ganses, and Mark Lodi and his mother. Mark is a successful London artist. Barbara a successful London decorator. Their long-standing engagement was broken and Farrell Armitage, wealthy Londoner, took Barbara's announced suit. Now, without warning, a newspaper prints the news that Barbara and Mark will marry. Lella Gans, who loves Mark, reads the article just as she starts to work.

Chapter 48

BARBARA'S SURPRISE
 MARK and Barbara. After that first swimming moment in her mother's room Lella had felt nothing emotionally new about it.

There had been so little hope, really, that Farrell Armitage would be able to come between them. She had not seen him since that day of climax, nearly a year ago, when he had pushed the emerald into her hand, but Patsy Raoul spoke of him sometimes.

She went up Malavie's dark stairs and into the room where she had to leave her hat. She had taken a case and her extravagance had made her almost the earliest arrival. She walked through the empty, sunny workrooms and through a door lettered "Miss Quentin." She knew there was a telephone there, and she thought it would amuse her to ring up Barbara before she left home.

"Wish her luck and all that." But Barbara was not at her hotel; she was here in the big, bare room. She leaned, palms downward, upon a pile of sketches, her pose absorbed and intent, her eyes blank.

"Oh! Sorry!" said Lella. Barbara started and smiled. The sketches toppled and she straightened them before she spoke.

"You're early, Lella. All well?" "All excellent, thanks. If you don't hear glowing reports of my progress, it's only because I don't seem to be making any." She paused and added, "I came in to use your phone in your absence, as a matter of fact."

"Branch of discipline," twinkled Barbara. "Good thing I'm here to stop you." They regarded each other easily and pleasantly across the littered table.

"Well, I hope you know what I would have said to you on the phone," managed Lella at last. "I don't know why it always sounds so much thinner done face to face. But there you are—I wish you sharpness. Both of you."

Barbara lifted her head sharply. The movement brought it into sharp focus, and immediately the silvery gold deepened and darkened, wave upon wave. Her eyes darkened, too, and grew wary.

"I don't understand you. You speak as though I'd chosen." "Well, according to the paper, you have. Your engagement is announced to Mark."

"But it can't be! I didn't send any announcement to the papers." Lella shrugged.

"Well, someone did. Mark, probably. You'll have shoals of congratulations all day, I don't doubt." She turned away, moistening dry lips.

"But—!" began Barbara. She looked suddenly very young, a slender, bewildered child in a dark frock. "There's a mistake," she insisted. "If Mark announced our engagement, he did it for some reason of his own. I haven't said I'd marry him."

"No!" Jacques Malavie, Ltd., like Lella, was not impressed by the denial. "Ah, well, the day will come, nevertheless." He added with genuine dignity, "You know how greatly you could honor me if you would crown our collaboration—"

"It is I who am honored," she replied. "But it isn't possible." Jacques Malavie, Ltd., allowed a smile to lift his austere lips.

"I congratulate you," he said, "on having—ah—definitely eliminated one of us."

Barbara saluted the little joke gratefully and went back to her own room. She put on outdoor things and ran down into the sunshine.

Beautiful, these October days! And on the thought there came scurrying the ghosts. Autumn in the west country—the wandering leaves, the snap of bracken underfoot, the swelling murmur of the sea. And for the first time in more than twenty years she remembered, here in the dirty little London street, that on such a day as this she had promised Mark's father to take care of Mark and that she had had in her hands a ball, a gay, big, bouncing thing. Her fingers curved, remembering it.

Barbara found her thought inevitably swinging from Mark to Farrell, keeping his steady course, confident and powerful. Barbara told herself that if, after a year, she could not choose between these two men she was answered. She was not meant to marry at all.

"Old maid? Old maid? Tapped Barbara's heels on the pavements. She shook her head, protesting. She loved her life, the life of these last twelve months, but just because she loved it she desired its fulfillment.

"Good-morning, Barbara!" She checked and turned with real pleasure.

"Mr. Frere! How in the world could I have passed you! Oh, I am so glad to see you! I suppose you are staying at Brandish Place with Farrell?"

"Well, I thought I was." The bright eyes snapped mischievously at her. "But I'm not at all sure now that I'm not staying at Brandish Place with Mark."

Barbara looked amusedly at the distant pile of Farrell's house, just visible from this part of the Park.

"Ah, a year ago you would have apologized for him," commented the old man. "You would have rushed to his defense."

"He never did; but you wouldn't see it! Now let us just sit down for a few minutes on this sunny bench. Don't say that you haven't really time to stop and talk to me, because I know nobody ever has. Were you going to Brandish Place?"

"Yes, I have a bone to pick with Mark. About the announcement he put in this morning's papers."

"Well, then you will be disappointed, because he is not at home." "Where is he, do you know?" "I understood him to say last night that he was dining and supping with Miss Patsy Raoul. Let me hope," added Mr. Frere noncommittally, "that her hospitality will include a morning paper, too."

Barbara watched the vicar's stick tapping and churning there in the loose earth, a poor substitute for his pond.

J'VILLE GRANGE PLANS PROGRAM

Another splendid program will be presented at the Jacksonville Grange Friday evening. The committee in charge, Mrs. Catherine Wendt and Nellie Niedermeyer, will present a patriotic program and will be assisted by Mrs. Ray Hunsaker of the Jacksonville school, who has arranged for several numbers by the choired children.

WOMAN IDENTIFIES ROSEBURG HOLDUP

ROSEBURG, Ore., Feb. 8.—(AP)—Clarence W. Steart, 20, former Marshfield resident and ex-member of the U. S. marines, is held in jail here following his confession, officers report, of a holdup in Roseburg last Sunday night and the passing of a worthless check. The holdup victim, Mrs. J. A. Peterson, had no money for the robber, but her accurate personal description of the youth led to his arrest where he was camped with his stepfather and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Wilson, who were exonerated in the youth's confession of any complicity in his crimes.

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Visit o Moro Castle!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—In Dire Peril

By EDWIN ALGER



Colton Grazing Bill Is Passed

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8.—(AP)—The Colton bill authorizing the secretary of the Interior to supervise land suitable for grazing on the public domain by the establishment of national ranges, was passed today of the house.

FINGERS IN MOUTH

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



Dies on Platform

PORTLAND, Ore., Feb. 8.—(AP)—Mrs. Thomas Carriok Burke, music patron, dropped dead from a sudden heart attack here today as she stepped from the platform at Reed College after concluding a lecture on modern music.

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BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



SOLDIER WHO SERVED WITH CUSTER PASSES

NATIONAL SOLDIERS' HOME, SAWTELLE, Calif., Feb. 8.—(AP)—Funeral services will be held here today for Henry M. Brinkerhoff, 79, who served with General Custer in the battle of the Little Big Horn.

PENDLETON, Ore., Feb. 8.—(AP)—

Mrs. Lilla Kirk, prominent wheat ranch operator of Astoria, and Mrs. Armanda Van Landingham were fatally injured in an automobile accident near Milton late yesterday.

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